ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.

Vol. VI. *November* 8, 1844. No. 9.

G. B. Airy, Esq., President, in the Chair.

The Secretary read the following extract from the Minutes of Council, dated September 20, 1844 :—

"The office of President having become vacant since the last Meeting of the Council, in consequence of the death of Mr. Baily, it was moved by Mr. Sheepshanks, seconded by Mr. De Morgan, and resolved unanimously,

That Mr. Airy be appointed to fill the office of President of the Society until the next Annual General Meeting.

Resolved also,

That Mr. Christie be appointed Vice-President in the room of Mr. Airy, until the next Annual General Meeting."

Among the presents received since the last Meeting of the Society, the following were announced :—

I. An equatoreal telescope, by Smeaton, presented by Mrs. Somerville, and accompanied by the following note :—

"*September* 12, 1844.

"Sir,—May I request you will have the goodness to present to the Royal Astronomical Society, in my name, an equatoreal, which was made by the late Mr. Smeaton the engineer, and left to me by his daughter, Mrs. Dixon, at her death, who had frequently told me that it was her father's invention, and the first instrument of the kind that had been constructed.

"I remain, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"Thomas Galloway, Esq. "Mary Somerville."

"Secretary."

II. A cast taken from Sir Francis Chantrey's marble bust of Mrs. Somerville, presented by Frederick S. Archer, Esq.

III. Several copies of "Plane Tables for conveniently laying down Portions of a Celestial or Terrestrial Map," constructed by the late Rev. Francis Wollaston, presented by his daughter, Miss A. H. Wollaston.

The President announced that the office of Judge (for Great Britain) of the fulfilment of the conditions necessary for the award of the Comet Medal, offered by his Majesty Christian VIII., king of Denmark, having become vacant, his Majesty had been pleased to appoint him (the Astronomer Royal) to succeed to that office, and he read to the Meeting the conditions under which the medal would be granted from the *Monthly Notices*, Vol. III., p. 132.

For the convenience of Fellows and others who may not have the volume of the *Monthly Notices* at hand, the regulations are here reprinted, with the alterations which have been made in consequence of the death of Mr. Baily and Dr. Olbers of Bremen :—

"His Majesty the King of Denmark has been pleased to found a gold medal, of the value of twenty ducats, to be given to the first discoverer of a telescopic comet, subject to the following conditions, which are, in some respects, different from those published in the year 1832.

"1. The medal is to be given to the person who may first discover a telescopic comet (that is, a comet not visible to the naked eye at the time of its discovery), and not of known revolution.

"2. The discoverer, if in any part of Europe except Great Britain, must send *immediate* notice to Professor Schumacher, of Altona; and if in Great Britain, or any other quarter of the globe except Europe, must send *immediate* notice to G. B. Airy, Esq., Astronomer Royal, Royal Observatory, Greenwich.

"3. Such notice must be sent by the *first* post after the discovery, and in case no post should be established in the place, then by the *first* conveyance that presents itself, without waiting for more observations. A strict attention to this condition is absolutely necessary, for, when it is not complied with, the medal will not be awarded at all, if there be only one who has seen the comet; and, where it has been seen by more than one, it will be given to the discoverer next in order of time who does comply with this condition.

"4. The first notice should contain, not only the time of the discovery, as nearly as the same can be ascertained, in order to avoid any disputed claims, but also the best possible determination of the position of the comet, and the direction of its course, if these points can (even approximately) be ascertained from the observations of one night.

"5. If the first night's observations are not sufficient to determine all these points with sufficient accuracy, the discoverer must, as soon as he gets a second observation, send *another* communi-

cation as above directed, together with a statement of the longitude of the place, if it should not be a known observatory: but the hope of getting a second observation will not be admitted as an excuse for delaying the communication of the first.

"6. The medal is to be adjudged twelve months after the discovery of the comet, and no claim can be admitted after that period has elapsed.

"7. Professor Schumacher and Mr. Airy are to determine whether a discovery is to be considered as established or not: but should they differ in opinion, Professor Gauss, of Göttingen, is to decide between them."

The President then announced that, in pursuance of a resolution of the Council, which had been duly intimated to the Fellows, as required by the Bye-Laws, the business of the Ordinary Meeting would now be concluded, and that a Special General Meeting would be held immediately, for the purpose of hearing read a Memoir of the late President, which Sir John Herschel, upon the request of the Council, had undertaken to prepare.

London:—Printed by Moyes and Barclay, Castle Street, Leicester Square.